

Funds Will Help Improve Communication and Coordination Among First Responders

Washington, DC - To allow firefighters to maintain better contact with one another in emergency situations, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced a \$90,000 federal grant for the Ithaca Fire Department. The funding is provided through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program (AFG) and administered by the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The funds will allow the department to purchase nine vehicle repeaters (radios), ensuring that firefighters called into buildings with thick walls layered with steel and concrete will not be cut off from vital communications.

"When firefighters are called into dangerous situations, they should have full confidence in the communication systems that exists to protect their lives and aid their efforts to save the lives of others," said Hinchey. "This is especially important in Ithaca, and more specifically on the Cornell campus, where firefighters could see their radios cut out when inside some of the larger buildings there. I am so happy to announce this grant for the Ithaca Fire Department, which will help address this problem. We've got to do everything we can to ensure that first responders throughout New York and across the country have access to the training and equipment they need to protect and rescue those in harm's way."

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey has worked to secure full funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, since its inception in 2001. More than \$18 million in grants have been awarded to fire and emergency departments in Hinchey's congressional district.

Hinchey is also the author of the SERVE (Supporting Emergency Responders' Volunteer Efforts) Act, which would provide a \$1,000 federal tax credit to individuals who are active members of volunteer firefighting and EMS organizations.

The congressman has sponsored a number of workshops across his congressional district in the past to help fire departments successfully navigate the grant application process. For more information on applying for federal grants, fire and EMS departments should contact Hinchey's Ithaca office at 607-273-1388. For the most current information regarding the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, please visit www.firegrantsupport.com.

